

## **Chapter 5 Public and Agency Coordination**

This chapter documents the public and agency coordination on the NSC since the approval of the FEIS in 1997.

### **Agency Coordination**

Since the publication of the FEIS, continued agency coordination has taken place primarily through the Value Engineering (VE) process, as described in Chapter 1.

The Team for the first VE Study, focused on the area between the Spokane River and Lincoln Road, included participants from Spokane County and the City of Spokane. Guest speakers included the Traffic Engineer for the City of Spokane, and the roadmaster for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (via conference phone call).

The second VE Study, in March 1999, focused on the proposed project between Lincoln Road and US 395 at Wandermere. The study team included representatives from Mead School District, Spokane County, Federal Highway Administration, and local neighborhoods. Three residents from the Garden City Addition neighborhood and one from the southeast side of the proposed US 2 interchange participated in the study.

### **Access Control Plan**

WSDOT will continue to coordinate with the City of Spokane, Spokane County and emergency services regarding access issues. Within the City of Spokane, the NSC proposes to eliminate east-west traffic on three city streets (Cleveland, Fairview and Bridgeport). East-west traffic will be maintained on Euclid, Wellesley, and Francis Avenues. Within Spokane County, the NSC proposes to cul-de-sac Fairview Road and Piper Road. Local agency approval is required for any planned frontage roads, county road or city street connections, or cul-de-sacs. The local agency must also agree in writing to accept and maintain the connecting section as a county road or city street. Upon WSDOT approval, the Access Report Plan will be submitted to city and county officials for review and meetings will be held to discuss the report.

### **Cooperating Agencies**

There has been no change from the FEIS, as outlined in Chapter 5, pages 5-1 through 5-2. The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are serving as cooperating agencies for this project. The BPA has jurisdiction over a large amount of land on the north end of the project, and the corridor crosses several BPA power transmission lines. The EPA is a cooperating agency based on its jurisdiction over the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Aquifer.

## ***General Coordination***

The following civic organizations have indicated their support for the NSC project:

Spokane Area Chamber of Commerce  
Bemiss Neighborhood Council  
Hillyard Neighborhood Council

As WSDOT continues to coordinate with affected agencies and major property owners along the corridor of the NSC, meetings have been held with the following (neighborhood coordination is found under Public Involvement):

### **NSC Pilot Housing Program**

A special effort has been made in the cause of neighborhood rehabilitation and affordable housing. The early coordination with neighborhoods and housing groups to minimize disruptions, as mentioned in the FEIS (p. 4-148), is the purpose of this program. The objectives of the NSC Pilot Housing Program are to provide replacement housing stock along the corridor, preserve the architectural integrity of neighborhoods by in-filling, provide additional low-income housing stock, and maintain decent, safe, and sanitary housing within the NSC right-of-way until construction of the NSC takes place.

### **Fire District 9/ Emergency Services**

Since the FEIS, Fire District 9 has assumed service for Fire District 6. (See Fire District Map, Chapter 4.)

Meetings:

1. February 11, 1999. Introduction of alignment revisions being considered.
2. March 3, 1999. Discussed access concerns and water supply issues.

Fire District 9 presented the following concerns during the development of the proposed alternative alignment, which were incorporated into the VE study.

- Maintain access to Gerlach Road from Market Street, as this is principal route to Mount Saint Michaels.
  - Investigate need for signalization at Pittsburg/ Farwell intersection.
  - Maintain direct access from Farwell Road to Shady Slope Road.
  - Obtain Fire District input on location of fire hydrants.
  - Provide emergency vehicle turn-arounds on US 395.
  - Review access to Wellington Heights.
  - Provide Opticoms at all new signalized intersections.
3. January 31, 2000. District gave concurrence on the location of the NSC frontage roads. Coordination will continue on median turn-around provisions, signing for cross streets, and emergency call boxes.

### **Mead School District**

The Assistant Superintendent of the Mead School District No. 354 participated in the Lincoln Road to US 395 at Wandermere VE Study.

## Area Churches

Information and concerns gathered through discussions and correspondence between WSDOT and the two churches in the study area have been considered in the selection of the Preferred Alternative . Both the Mead United Methodist Church and the Fairwood Baptist Church had a strong desire to remain in their current location, and therefore favor the Preferred Alternative.

## Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company

At the time the FEIS was written, Burlington Northern and consultants were creating a master development plan for the vacated Hillyard Railroad yard (FEIS, p. 5-3). The Master Plan has been completed, but it is not an active plan at this time. No binding site plan or permits are approved on this property.

Agreements and permits have been obtained for WSDOT to enter railroad property for survey purposes. An engineering firm has been retained as consultants to provide engineering and design work for railroad facilities impacted by the NSC project. WSDOT is working toward an agreement with BNSF on the realignment of the mainline tracks, spur lines, and the continued operation of the train assembly yard. An environmental consultant has been retained to investigate suspected soil contamination of BNSF properties.

Following is a list of the meetings that have taken place with BNSF since the publication of the FEIS:

1. June 30, 1998. Update on project status and obtain permission to set aerial survey targets.
2. July 14, 1998. Review surveying, track design, environmental assessments, and property acquisition.
3. July 30, 1998. Presented results of VE Study. WSDOT committed to provide conceptual design of proposed reconfigured rail facilities.
4. September 1, 1998. Discussed construction standards, and the hiring of consultant firm to assist WSDOT in design.
5. December 14, 1998. Along with engineering consultants, discussed next steps in design process.
6. February 2, 1999. Discussed property acquisition issues, right of entry permit for environmental investigations, BNSF approval process, involvement of the BNSF operation group in the rail design process.
7. February 24, 1999. Discussed operations issues. BNSF preferred that tracks remain east of NSC. WSDOT committed to investigate this option.
8. March to July, 1999. Preparation of rail designs by consultant with close coordination with BNSF engineering personnel.
9. August 3, 1999. Along with engineering consultants, discussed next steps in design process.
10. December 14, 1999. Meeting with BNSF to discuss current project status and to review proposed rail configurations and right-of-way issues.

### Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation

Informational meetings continued with Kaiser representatives after the publication of the FEIS in April 1997.

1. December 4, 1997. Update on the project status.
2. March 26, 1998
3. July 9, 1998. WSDOT staff introduced the consideration of alternative alignments between Hawthorne Road and US 395 at Wandermere. Kaiser representatives presented the company's future development plans.
4. July 10, 1998. Discuss survey issues and obtain right of entry permit for setting aerial survey targets.
5. May 28, 1999. WSDOT obtained information about outfall pipe.
6. December 30, 1999. WSDOT provided updated information of proposed alignment changes between Hawthorne Road and US 395 at Wandermere.
7. February 4, 1999. WSDOT staff discussed alternative alignment process status. Kaiser provided information on their environmental mitigation area for waste water treatment and air monitoring station.

### Bonneville Power Administration

WSDOT proposes the purchase of a portion of BPA's Bell-Boundary No. 3 transmission line corridor, which runs north-south between Kaiser Aluminum and Mead Royale Mobile Home Community. BPA determined that there are no future expansion plans for this transmission line corridor, but would require that adequate right-of-way be retained by BPA in order to protect the existing transmission line. Current leases on BPA property have been discussed for optimum coordination.

WSDOT and BPA have also discussed the relocation and/or raising of transmission for clearance where the NSC will cross the utility corridor. Adequate time frames have been established for this procedure.

Following correspondence on the above issues, WSDOT and BPA met on August 11, 1999, to discuss updates of the NSC project, impacts to BPA properties, and scheduling concerns.

### Avista Utilities

The following meetings have been held to date to coordinate the project with Avista.

1. March 9, 1999: WSDOT provided information on the project status and requested information on current and future utility plans.
2. March 20, 1999: Avista provided maps of current and proposed utility facilities.

### City of Spokane

The City of Spokane was represented in the first VE Study (see above, "Value Engineering Studies"), and continues to be involved in the Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail planning (see below, "Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail.")

The City of Spokane and WSDOT have worked in coordination on projects within the NSC corridor. A meeting was held September 25, 1999, to share information regarding the following City projects.

- Euclid Avenue improvements from Market Street to Freya Street. The NSC does not negatively impact this project, and is not impacted by this project.
- Francis Avenue/Market Street concrete intersection. (This project has since been canceled by the City of Spokane.)

Coordination is continuing regarding the treatment of the city streets and the associated utilities on the west side of the NSC between Illinois Avenue and Francis Avenue.

### Spokane County

Spokane County was represented in both of the VE Studies (see above, “Value Engineering Studies”), and continues to be involved in the Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail planning (see below, “Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail.”)

- January 5, 1999. WSDOT staff attended an informational meeting on the County Urban Area Connectors plan, presented by Spokane County.
- January 12, 2000. County and WSDOT staff discussed coordination of county road projects with the NSC, including: improvements to Farwell Road between US 2 and Market Street, reconstruction of Market Street north of Francis Avenue, frontage road locations, Shady Slope Road realignment.

### Spokane Transit Authority

The following meetings have been held to date to coordinate with Spokane Transit Authority (STA):

1. November 12, 1998: discussion of overall project
2. October 26, 1999: discussion of proposed alignment changes, and locations of park-and-ride facilities
3. November 10, 1999: STA provided WSDOT with a letter outlining preferred locations of park-and-ride facilities. These locations have been included in the current NSC plans.

### Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC)

Following is a brief description of the coordination between WSDOT and SRTC:

1. August 19, 1999: Discussed the proposed location of the NSC Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail between the Spokane River and US 395 at Wandermere.
2. September 9, 1999: SRTC Advisory Committee member joined WSDOT meeting with neighborhood council representatives, local pedestrian and bicycle clubs, to discuss the proposed NSC Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail location.
3. January 24, 2000: WSDOT submitted a request to SRTC to modify the regional base and forecast land use data in order to capture significant existing trip generators which are located in close proximity to NSC but were not reflected in the data files. WSDOT also requested minor modifications to the regional travel demand model network in order to more discretely represent trip paths in the vicinity of NSC interchanges.

4. February 2, 2000: A letter was received from SRTC approving the changes requested in the January 24, 2000 correspondence.
5. February 9, 2000: WSDOT requested guidance concerning the Northside Arterial (NSA). The NSA is a proposed Spokane County project which is currently in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), but is no longer part of the County's long-range transportation plan.
6. February 15, 2000: SRTC indicated that until Spokane County requests that SRTC remove the NSA from the regional plan, the NSA should be considered part of the MTP. Therefore, travel demand for forecasting for the NSC should include the NSA as a forecast facility assumption.
7. February 22, 2000: WSDOT requested clarification of the MTP amendment process, especially as it related to the removal obsolete facility plans.
8. February 22, 2000: SRTC provided a letter to WSDOT supporting WSDOT's request to amend the Spokane Area Functional Classification System to incorporate the NSC as a limited access freeway.
9. March 1, 2000: Spokane County requested SRTC to remove the NSA from the forecast network.
10. March 8, 2000: WSDOT was advised that the request to remove the NSA from the network is being processed, and that WSDOT should proceed with travel demand forecasting assuming the NSA is not part of the forecast transportation network.

Additionally, numerous informal meetings were conducted among WSDOT and SRTC staff, between September 1999 and March 2000, to ensure that travel demand forecasting for the SEIS was done in a manner consistent with SRTC practices, policies, and procedures.

## Public Involvement

The public involvement plan for the revisions to the NSC used the following approaches to ensure inclusion of business, private citizens, federal, state, and local agencies, and other interested groups in the EIS process:

- Disseminating information to the general public, businesses, citizen groups, and public agencies and officials.

The dissemination of information was enhanced with two new modes. A page devoted to the NSC was established on the WSDOT Eastern Region's web site. This page was created and posted in January 1999, and has been updated as changes and development occur. It also provides another opportunity for feedback. A NSC newsletter was created to keep the public updated on the project. Three issues were distributed; Fall 1998, Winter 1998/1999, and Fall 1999. Over 15,000 copies of the Winter issue were mailed out along with the Open House announcements in February, to residents and businesses in the vicinity of the corridor, property owners, and to those on the general mailing list.
- Holding Open Houses.

All open houses were informal, with displays and staff to present the latest information on the project, and to receive verbal and written comment.

1. February 18, 1999: focusing on the Hawthorne Road to US 395 at Wandermere segment, held at Northwood Middle School, 6-10 pm. with 525 people signing attendance sheet (estimated attendance: 700-1000). The changes within the FEIS Preferred Alignment corridor were presented, along with the preliminary proposal and comparison of the revised northern alternative alignment.
2. February 25, 1999: focusing on the Spokane River to Hawthorne Road segment, held at the Northeast Community Center, 6-8 pm. with 337 people signing attendance sheet. The Revised Market/Greene Alignment resulting from the VE Study was presented with comparison to the FEIS Preferred Alignment.
3. June 30, 1999: focusing on the Hawthorne Road to US 395 at Wandermere segment, held at Mead Middle School, 4-8 pm. with 530 people signing attendance sheet.

Further design and refinement of the alignment continued, including the input from the public. More accurate assessments of residential and business displacements and environmental impacts were developed, and these were presented in the following forums:

4. January 12, 2000: meeting with Hillyard/Bemiss area business owners and operators; held at the Northeast Community Center, 6:30-8:30 pm, with 33 people signing attendance sheet.
5. February 8, 2000: meeting with Garden City and Mead area residents to develop preferred alignment of the pedestrian/bicycle trail in that neighborhood; held at Northwood Middle School, 6:30-8:30 pm, with 32 people signing attendance sheet.
6. February 15, 2000: meeting with Hillyard/Bemiss area residential landowners and occupants; held at the Northeast Community Center, 6:30-8:30 pm, with 84 people signing attendance sheet.
7. February 22, 2000: open house presenting the latest information on alignment and impacts of the Preferred Alternative between the Spokane River and Gerlach Road; held at the Northeast Community Center, 5:00-8:00 pm, with 177 people signing attendance sheet.
8. March 22, 2000: meeting for business owners and operators between Gerlach Road and Wandermere; held at Northwood Middle School, 6:30-8:30 pm, with 16 people signing attendance sheet.
9. April 19, 2000: meeting for residential landowners and occupants between Gerlach Road and Wandermere; held at Northwood Middle School, 6:30-8:30 pm, with 66 people signing attendance sheet.
10. May 24, 2000: open house presenting the latest information on the alignment between the Spokane River and Wandermere; held at Rogers High School, 5:00-8:00 pm, with 127 people signing attendance sheet.

- Holding community meetings.

Additional information meetings were held at the request of individuals and community groups. Below is a synopsis of the meetings with neighborhoods which are between the Spokane River and US 395 at Wandermere.

**Bemiss Neighborhood Council**

**January 12, 1999.** 10 attendees. Council chair responded with letter of support for the project, stating it will reduce traffic congestion and be good for neighborhood as well as Spokane as a whole.

**November 9, 1999.**

**Hillyard Neighborhood Council**

**January 20, 1999.** 21 attendees.

**April 15, 1999.** Meeting with Council Chair. Project Engineer Keith Martin was invited and committed to attend neighborhood council's monthly meetings to provide brief updates and receive input.

**May 19, 1999.** 10 attendees. Residents invited to serve on advisory committee. General concerns were about elevation of roadway.

**Monthly meetings continue.**

**Cooper Neighborhood**

**November 24, 1999.**

**Garden City - Mead Neighborhood Coalition**

**April 20, 1999.** WSDOT Project Engineer, Environmental Manager, and Real Estate Services Manager met with neighborhood for question and answer session following open house.

**July 6, 1999.** WSDOT Project Engineer, Environmental Manager, and Real Estate Services Manager met at Mead United Methodist Church as follow-up after June Open House.

**Friends of Little Spokane**

**February 23, 1999.** Approximately 75 attendees.

## ***Public Comment***

Public comment received regarding the selection of the VE North Alignment as the new Preferred Alternative reflect that the published FEIS set up a level of expectation of the eventual location of the NSC. The Garden City area neighborhoods were never included in the alternatives considered in the original EIS process, but are impacted by the new Preferred Alternative. The major concerns expressed by the Garden City area residents are:

- After going through full public process, the preferred alignment published in the FEIS set up a level of expectation about the future location of the NSC. This information was available to be used by both residents within and outside of the published corridor in making decisions on property purchases, sales, or improvements. The Garden City neighborhood and vicinity were well outside of the published preferred alignment.
- The reason given for the reconsideration of the alignment location between Hawthorne Road and US 395 at Wandermere was to reduce impact on a growing



residential area. This growing residential area involves recent and proposed development which has taken place within the preferred alignment at published in the FEIS. The Garden City residents point out that the new Preferred Alternative avoids this growing area by instead impacting their older, more established and cohesive neighborhood. They feel that the impacts to a neighborhood which has been in existence for approximately 30 years will be greater than the impacts would have been to the newer homes and proposed development.

The other major issue of concern expressed by the residents throughout the project area is reduced property values. Residents believe that the construction and existence of the freeway in proximity to their homes will greatly reduce desirability of their property and the future sale price of their homes. The question of compensation for reduced value, as well as for damaged views and general desirability of their properties was raised many times. WSDOT completed a proximity analysis, to project impact of the freeway on close-by residential property values.

### ***Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail***

The project office is continuing to coordinate the planning and design of the pedestrian/bicycle path with the City of Spokane, Spokane County, SRTC, the County Health District, the Spokane Police, the Friends of the Centennial Trail, area bicycling and walking clubs, and neighborhood councils along the corridor. The NSC Pedestrian/Bicycle Trail is included in Spokane County's report, "Inventory and Analysis, Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities" (January 2000).

The meetings held to date:

1. August 19, 1999. Meeting with agencies and organizations which may have projects planned which the path may intersect with, or who have experience to lend.
2. September 9, 1999. Meeting with neighborhood council representatives and user groups to present preliminary alignment and receive input on improving alignment and design to best serve community. Input from this meeting along with advisement from the WSDOT Statewide Bicycle Coordinator resulted in the current alignment of the trail.
3. February 8, 2000: Meeting with the Mead/Garden City neighborhoods to discuss trail issues between Farwell Road and Pittsburg Street.

Additional meetings and mailings have shared the trail planning information with and offered the opportunity to comment to various interest groups and organizations:

- City of Spokane Bicycle Advisory Committee
- the regional Citizens Advisory Committee for Transportation
- Transportation Choices Coalition
- Spokane Bicycle Club
- Bicycle Alliance (statewide)
- Hobnailers (walking club)